IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all other listings in this application.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): A method for producing cheese, comprising:

(1) mixing a partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein with a milk material, to obtain a first mixture;

(2) coagulating said mixture with a milk coagulating enzyme, to obtain a second mixture comprising cheese curd and whey,

wherein said mixing said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein with said milk material is carried out by:

(a) adding said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein to said milk material, to obtain an initial mixture;

(b) maintaining said initial mixture at a temperature of 2 to 15°C for 5 to 24 hours, to obtain an incubated mixture; and

(c) treating said incubated mixture with transglutaminase.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 8, further comprising:

(3) separating said cheese curd from said whey.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 8, wherein said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein is prepared by treating milk whey protein with a protein decomposing enzyme.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 10, wherein said protein decomposing enzyme is selected from the group consisting of bromelain, neutrase, papain, and trypsin.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 10, wherein said protein decomposing enzyme is trypsin.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 8, wherein said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein is mixed with said milk material in an amount of 2 to 20 wt% of said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein, based on the total weight of said milk material.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 8, wherein said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein is mixed with said milk material in an amount of 5 to 10 wt% of said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein, based on the total weight of said milk material.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 8, wherein said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein and said milk material are mixed in relative amounts of 2 to 1,600 parts by weight of said milk material and one part by weight of said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein, based on the solid contents of said milk material and said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 8, wherein said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein and said milk material are mixed in relative amounts of 4 to 640 parts by weight of the said milk material and one part by weight of said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein, based on the solid contents of said milk material and said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein.

Claims 17-19 (Canceled).

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): The method of Claim ~~19~~ 8, wherein said initial mixture is maintained at a temperature of 2 to 15°C for 12 to 16 hours.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 8, wherein said milk material is selected from the group consisting of whole milk, semi-skim milk, and skim milk.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): A method for producing cheese, comprising:

(1) mixing a partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein with a milk material, to obtain a first mixture;

(2) treating said first mixture with transglutaminase, to obtain a second mixture; and

(3) coagulating said second mixture with a milk coagulating enzyme, to obtain a mixture comprising cheese curd and whey.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 22, further comprising:

(4) separating said cheese curd from said whey.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 22, wherein said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein is prepared by treating milk whey protein with a protein decomposing enzyme.

Claim 25 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 24, wherein said protein decomposing enzyme is selected from the group consisting of bromelain, neutrase, papain, and trypsin.

Claim 26 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 24, wherein said protein decomposing enzyme is trypsin.

Claim 27 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 22, wherein said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein is mixed with said milk material in an amount of 2 to 20 wt% of said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein, based on the total weight of said milk material.

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 22, wherein said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein is mixed with said milk material in an amount of 5 to 10 wt% of said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein, based on the total weight of said milk material.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 22, wherein said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein and said milk material are mixed in relative amounts of 2 to 1,600 parts by weight of said milk material and one part by weight of said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein, based on the solid contents of said milk material and said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein.

Claim 30 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 22, wherein said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein and said milk material are mixed in relative amounts of 2 to 1,600 parts by weight of said milk material and one part by weight of said partial hydrolysate

of milk whey protein, based on the solid contents of said milk material and said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein.

Claim 31 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 22, wherein said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein and said milk material are mixed in relative amounts of 4 to 640 parts by weight of the said milk material and one part by weight of said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein, based on the solid contents of said milk material and said partial hydrolysate of milk whey protein.

Claims 32-33 (Canceled).

Claim 34 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 22, wherein said milk material is selected from the group consisting of whole milk, semi-skim milk, and skim milk.